THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) According to a media report, a German Tour Operator, Mr. De Ruiter had selected the world's best ten beaches. Top ranking was given to Andaman Islands followed by Laccadive, the Maldives and Seychelles. His assessment has been based on verifiable factors such as sand quality, depth of water, etc. TIME Magazine had earlier declared beach No. 7, Havelock Island in Andaman as the "Best Beach in Asia".

(c) The Ministry of Tourism has been promoting tourism to the Andaman through publicity support and central assistance for infrastructure development.

Proposal for linking of small rivers and canals

296. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning to create smaller links between rivers and canals to resolve irregularities of water distribution; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposals alongwith its status so far?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) and Central Water Commission (CWC) formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Water Resources Development in 1980 envisaging inter-basin transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit ones. NPP comprises of two components, *viz.* (i) Himalayan rivers development component and (ii) Peninsular rivers development component. National Water Development Agency (NWDA) was set up in 1982 as a registered Society under MoWR to carry out detailed studies for NPP. NWDA, based on water balance and other studies, identified 30 links (14 under Himalayan and 16 under Peninsular) for preparation of feasibility reports (FR). FRs of 16 (2 Himalayan and 14 Peninsular) links have been completed by NWDA. Irrigation is a State subject and as per present policy, irrigation projects are planned, investigated, formulated, implemented and funded by the State Governments out of their own resources and as per their own priorities. Therefore, the works to resolve irregularities of water distribution are carried out by State Governments and the Central Government does not contemplate smaller links between rivers and canals.